



Today's Message

Date: September 1, 2019
Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas
Title: *"The Theology of Glory"—A Fool's Boast*

Text: 2 Corinthians 11:16–33 (ESV)

¹⁶ I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. ¹⁷ What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. ¹⁹ For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! ²⁰ For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. ²¹ To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, ³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

Introduction: Paul now advances his “Fool’s Speech,” comparing his credentials to those of the false teachers. We will follow his flow of thought, simply summarizing his words. At the conclusion, we will see how his “boast” establishes principles that should guide our ministries.

I. “I plead with you again, listen to me.” 16-21a

- A. “Listen while I will foolishly boast the way others do.” 16-18
- B. “You should listen to me because you gladly bear with other fools.” 19-20
 - 1. “You bear with fools because you think you are wise.” 19
 - 2. “You bear with fools even though they abuse you.” 20
 - 3. “You don’t see how foolish *you* are not to listen to me.” 21a

II. “Listen as I compare my boast-worthy credentials to those of the ‘super-apostles.’” 21b-29

- A. “In matters of heritage, they have no advantage.” 22
- B. “In matters of service for Christ, I am better.” 23-29
 - 1. “I have suffered pain frequently.” 23-25
 - 2. “I have endured danger everywhere.” 26
 - 3. “I have gone without day and night.” 27
 - 4. “I have borne concern every day.” 28-29

III. “And just so you don’t miss my point, let me tell you a story.” 30-33

- A. “Here is my point: the only boasting that matters is boasting in weakness.” 30-31
- B. “My escape from Damascus perfectly displays my weakness.” 32-33

Today’s take-home truth: God does not require the influence of the famous and successful; our weakness perfectly displays his glory.